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**MG Edward S. Cardon**

**Indianhead Column**

**Good Transitions Critical to Readiness**

**09 MAR 2012**



We are in the middle of a number of strategic, operational and tactical transitions. Transitions have a direct impact on our readiness, and how we lead and manage our transitions matters. Why is readiness so important?

Transitions directly impact the Armistice with the capabilities that people see, touch and feel – our contribution to the Alliance is combat readiness. Our capability is based on our true strength – Soldiers. Therefore, the most important transition is that of our Soldiers in and out of the Division.

Personnel turbulence in Korea is a major challenge, and everyone works hard to manage that turbulence to maintain and build readiness. Turbulence increases during the summer months. While we have worked hard over the last several months to improve our readiness – we must lead the upcoming transitions to sustain what we have, and wherever and whenever possible, build on that readiness. If each Soldier leaving this summer puts effort into transitioning all their knowledge to those who follow, we can sustain our readiness. This will not be easy as the best laid plans are often impacted by outside events. It is not that we are going to stop all these events – it is more about working our transitions hard when challenged by outside events.

Here is how you can help. This process starts with the command designated sponsor to every inbound Soldier, and the proper recognition of the contributions of those who are leaving – those who joined a long line of Soldiers who provided the readiness that ensured deterrence. We have a responsibility to inform our newest Warriors and their Families what they can expect and how best to prepare for their assignment prior to arriving in Korea. One e-mail does not make a sponsor. It is vital that our sponsors carry on a dialogue with our inbound Warriors and provide them all of the assistance possible in managing their arrival and in-processing, as well as their integration. If we fail to properly sponsor and integrate our new Soldiers we are failing in our transition. The more efficiently new Soldiers and their Families are integrated into the unit, the quicker they can start contributing to our mission.

If you are not a command designated sponsor, you are not off the hook; we are all sponsors. Please go out of your way to make our new Soldiers and their Families feel welcome. Make sure you greet them with a handshake and explain how this can be a life-defining assignment.



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For every NCO and officer (warrants included), be sure to update your continuity books and execute a deliberate right-seat/left-seat ride to hand off duties, critical relationships and partnerships to ensure a smooth transition. It is up to our outgoing Soldiers and command teams to make sure that all new Soldiers and leaders are set up for success and can hit the ground running.

It is equally important for us to send our current Warriors and their Families to their next duty station, or back to the civilian world, in a dignified and professional manner. That means evaluations and awards are completed and in Soldiers' hands before they depart. Good units take care of their Soldiers, even those departing their ranks. We owe it to every Warrior who has served here to make sure we send them off appropriately, regardless of their position or rank.

My goal is that every Soldier who leaves here does so with an overwhelming sense of pride. Pride in the job they did here in support of the ROK-U.S. Alliance, pride in their unit and pride that they were part of the force that maintained peace and stability in this region of the world. Finally Soldiers should be proud of their personal and professional growth while assigned to the only permanently forward-stationed Division in our Army.

Thank you for all you do every day.

Second to None!